



# THE EXAMINER



Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital, Twentynine Palms, California

Volume 11, No. 2

*"Serving with Pride and Professionalism"*

February 2003

## Someone You Are Close to Is Getting the Vaccine:

### *What You Should Know and Do About Getting the Smallpox Vaccine*

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

If someone you have close, physical contact with (your spouse or partner or other adult family member) is getting the smallpox vaccine, there are some things you should know.

#### **What You Should Know:**

The smallpox vaccine contains a live virus called vaccinia, which is related to smallpox, though milder. The vaccine helps the body develop immunity to smallpox. And while the smallpox vaccine is safe and effective for most people who receive it, the fact that the virus is live creates special concerns.

The main concern for people who have close, physical contact with someone who has gotten the vaccine is that the vaccinia virus can be spread from the vaccination site, causing rash (mild to severe), fever, and head and body aches. Vaccinia is spread by touching a vaccination site before it has healed or by touching bandages, clothing, or other material contaminated with live virus from the vaccination site and then touching another part of the body or touching someone else. The vaccination site often becomes itchy, which may lead to scratching, rubbing, or touching the site. In the past, when vaccinated persons spread vaccinia to other parts of their body, it often was to their eyes or their genitals. Vaccinated persons also can spread vaccinia to other individuals. In the past, this was reported to occur between 20 and 60 times out of 1 million vaccinated individuals and often involved children.

Please see **VACCINE** on page 7



*HMI Juanita Lawrence of the hospital's Preventive Medicine Department receives her Smallpox vaccine from Lt. Cmdr. Marjorie Alexander of Pediatrics. Alexander and Lawrence recently attended training on administering the vaccine.*

## Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations Seeks Information from Patients

The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) and the Navy Medical Inspector General (MEDINSGEN) will conduct an accreditation survey of Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms from February 24 through 28, 2003.

The purpose of the survey will be to evaluate the organization's compliance with nationally established Joint Commission and United States Navy standards. The survey results will be used to determine whether, and the conditions under which accreditation should be awarded the organization.

Joint Commission standards deal with organizational quality of care issues and the safety of the environment in which care is provided. Anyone believing that he or she has pertinent and valid information about such matters may request a public information interview with the Joint Commission's field representatives at the time of survey. Information presented at the interview will be carefully evaluated for relevance to the accreditation process. Requests for a public information interview must be made in writing and should be sent to the Joint Commission no later than five working days before the survey begins.

Please see **JOINT COMMISSION** on page 7

## Highlights...

Nearly one million Americans die every year of heart disease, making it the leading cause of death in the US. One of the greatest health risks to your heart is tobacco use, either through smoking, dipping or from exposure to second hand smoke.

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As of January 1, 2003, the first six National patient safety goals took effect in an effort to improve performance and reduce errors in healthcare organizations.

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Valentine's Day is fast approaching and the Scholarships for Military Children program has a really "sweet" deal for military children going to college this fall.

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The Examiner can now be viewed online at: [www.nhnp.med.navy.mil](http://www.nhnp.med.navy.mil)

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To Your Health...

# February is Heart Health Month

By Martha Hunt, MA Health Promotions Coordinator  
Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital

Nearly one million Americans die every year of heart disease, making it the leading cause of death in the US. One of the greatest health risks to your heart is tobacco use, either through smoking, dipping or from exposure to second hand smoke. In fact, smokers in their 30's and 40's have five times more heart attacks than non-smokers in the same age group. The younger a person is when they experience a heart attack, the more likely it is to be related to tobacco use.

People exposed to second hand smoke have double the risk of developing heart disease as non-smokers with nearly 60,000 Americans dying each year from heart attacks caused by second hand smoke.

Overall, 30 to 40 year -olds who use tobacco are three times as likely to die of all causes, as are non-smokers. In fact, half of all tobacco users die before age 55 and do not live long enough to see their kids and grand kids grow up.

The nicotine and carbon monoxide in tobacco affect heart disease more than any of the over 4,000 chemicals found in tobacco. They act on the heart by tightening, hardening and constricting the blood vessels that feed the heart. Tobacco use also acts on your heart by stimulating the formation of small blood clots that block the blood vessels in the heart and cut off the supply of oxygen and nutrients to the heart muscles. Some of these small blood

clots can break off and enter the brain, causing strokes. The beneficial effects of taking aspirin or exercising regularly to reduce your risk of heart attack are cancelled by the affects of nicotine and carbon monoxide.

Heart attacks happen when these blood vessels in the heart muscle are blocked off so severely, either by constriction or by small blood clots, that the heart muscle is damaged. If the blood supply to the heart muscles is cut off long enough, then the damage is permanent and can result in death or disability.

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**People exposed to second hand smoke have double the risk of developing heart disease as non-smokers with nearly 60,000 Americans dying each year from heart attacks caused by second hand smoke**

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Symptoms of a heart attack include pressure or pain in the center of the chest that may spread up the neck to the shoulder or arms, as well as lightheadedness, fainting or shortness of breathe, sweating or nausea. If you have any of these symptoms for more than a few minutes, seek medical care immediately. Every minute counts as to whether you live through a heart attack. It's better to be safe and find out that your symptoms are only indigestion, than to die from a heart attack.

The best way to avoid a heart attack at all is to do your best to prevent one up front. If you use tobacco of any kind, seek help to quit. If you live with someone who uses tobacco, help them to stop. Tobacco cessation classes are offered in the Naval Hospital. Call 830-2814 to sign up.

Patient Safety...

## The First of Six National Goals

LT Daniel Anthony, Multi-Service Ward  
Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital

As of January 1, 2003, the first six national patient safety goals took effect in an effort to improve performance and reduce errors in healthcare organizations. Here at Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms our Patient Safety Improvement Program (PSIP) began late last year ahead of schedule to develop methods for implementing these goals. Each month, therefore, we shall report on one of the six goals to keep our beneficiaries apprised of our progress. The first goal challenges us to improve the accuracy of patient identification.

Why is this important? Any service member who has visited the hospital for a check-up knows that even a simple visit often involves a trip to the pharmacy, the laboratory, or to radiology. Emergency room visits can turn into ward admissions. At all these places where care is to be rendered, the chance for improperly identifying the patient is real.

How then do we prevent such errors from occurring? Several suggestions for uniquely identifying a patient are acceptable. Our task was to select two identifiers that could be confirmed by the patient or their guardian in special cases where the patient was unable to respond.

We have decided to use the patient's full name and the last four digits of their sponsor's social security number. This is a simple, yet effective means by which an individual can be uniquely identified.

Further recommendations under this safety goal refer to the surgical patient or anyone undergoing an invasive procedure. In addition to these two identifiers, a staff member will confirm the correct procedure and surgical site with the patient. In this way, the chance of a "wrong-site/wrong-surgery" error is all but eliminated.

Therefore, when it seems like every staff member is asking for the same information and it grows tiresome to answer the same questions more than once, know that these checks and re-checks of pertinent data are done with your safety in mind! This is one small part of our larger goal here at Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms of providing the best and safest healthcare to our beneficiaries.

**Speak up if you have questions or concerns about your medical care.**

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The Examiner welcomes your comments and suggestions concerning the publication. Deadline for submission of articles is the 15th of each month for the following month's edition. Any format is welcome, however, the preferred method of submission is by e-mail or by computer disk.

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# Scholarships for Military Children a Sweet Deal for Recipients

By Bonnie Powell  
Defense Commissary Agency

**F**ORT LEE, Va. – Valentine's Day is fast approaching and the Scholarships for Military Children program has a really "sweet" deal for military children going to college this fall. Applications for \$1,500 scholarships are due in at the nearest commissary by Feb. 21, just after Valentine's Day. At least one scholarship will be awarded at every commissary location with qualified applicants.

"We've made it even easier to apply this year," said program liaison Edna Hoogewind of the Defense Commissary Agency. "Everything a potential applicant needs to know is in the Frequently Asked Questions section of our scholarship page at <http://www.commissaries.com>. The application can be downloaded and filled out by hand, or filled out on the computer and saved as a file. Copies of the application are also available at commissaries worldwide."

The scholarship essay topic is "How has being the child of a military service member influenced your educational goals?" In past years the essay has been a key factor, along with activities and community involvement, in deciding among the many outstanding applicants.

"Remember, the deadline for returning applications by hand or mail to a commissary is Feb. 21," said Hoogewind.

"Applications must be in the store by close of business on that day, and if you are not hand-delivering your application, it's a good idea to use a delivery method that supplies a return receipt. Commissaries will bundle up the applications and send them to Scholarship Managers as soon as the deadline passes," said Hoogewind. "Scholarship Managers will only acknowledge final receipt of the applications if students include a self-addressed and stamped post card with their applications."

Hoogewind also advises students to check all their materials carefully for simple things – like making sure the application is signed or that they are using the 2003 application, not one from previous years.

The scholarship program is open to unmarried children under the age of 21 (23 if enrolled in school) of active duty personnel, Reserve, Guard and retired military. Eligibility will be determined using the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) database. Applicants should ensure that they, as well as their sponsor, are currently enrolled in the DEERS database and that they have a current ID card. All applicants must be citizens of the United States.

The applicant must be planning to attend, or already attending, an accredited college or university full-time in the fall term of 2003. Students at community or junior colleges must be enrolled in a program of studies designed to transfer directly into a four-

year program. Additional instructions can be found on the application.

Fisher House Foundation, a nonprofit organization best known for building comfort homes near military medical facilities, administers the Scholarships for Military Children program. Fisher House Foundation uses the services of Scholarship Managers, a professional firm that has handled more than 400 programs, to screen applicants and award scholarships. Neither Fisher House nor DeCA are involved in the decision process.

The Scholarships for Military Children program has awarded 920 scholarships and nearly \$1.5 million since the first awards were given in 2001. Scholarships are funded through the voluntary donations of the various manufacturers, brokers and suppliers that sell products in commissaries.

The Defense Commissary Agency operates nearly 280 commissaries worldwide, providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families. Authorized commissary patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings worth more than \$2,400 annually for a family of four.

A core military family support element and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family

readiness, enhance the quality of life for America's military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.

## Upcoming Diabetes Class Schedule

**T**he Internal Medicine Clinic of the Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital offers a series of "Diabetes Self-Management Classes."

The schedule of classes is as follows:  
**Controlling Your Cholesterol.** Thursday, Feb. 20.

**Alternative Medicine Therapies (Vitamins, Herbs, Diet Supplements) & Diabetes.** Thursday, Mar. 20.

**Oral Diabetes Medicines.** Thursday, April 17.

**Exercising to Improve Diabetes.** Thursday, May 22.

**Taking Care of Your Feet.** Thursday, June 19.

All classes are held in the Family Practice Clinic Classroom 3.

Anyone with diabetes or interested in learning more about diabetes is welcome to attend.

For more information call Lt. Julie Lundstad at 830-2067.

## DoD's Theater Medical Information Program Benefits the War Fighter

**T**he Department of Defense now has the capability to track disease and injury trends and create health care alerts to biological or chemical attacks. The Theater Medical Information Program (TMIP) also captures medical records and links health care in the theater of conflict with the sustaining base. These features in the latest iteration of the TMIP software are intended for use by the uniformed services once testing and evaluation is successfully completed.

Through TMIP, health care providers will not only have access to a patient's medical history prior to, during and following deployment, but they also will have biological or chemical attack alerts available to make informed clinical decisions. These capabilities never existed before, and it will greatly benefit the war fighter, said Lt. Col. Thomas Yingst, TMIP program manager.

TMIP integrates medical information systems and ensures their precise, interoperable support for rapid mobilization, deployment and sustainment of all theater medical services. TMIP also plays a vital role in force health protection by providing critical medical data for decision making. Our work is extremely important, and we are dedicated to delivering this tool to the field. Our focus has been and will continue to be on protecting the health of the war fighter and providing medical information to theater commanders. That is what this program is all about, said Yingst.

The new TMIP software also focuses on health care delivery including medical encounter and care plan documentation, decision support tools, medical surveillance and management of blood and blood product inventories; medical logistics including resupply, inventory and assemblage management and product identification; and command and control including analysis of medical sustainability and supportability assessments of medical supplies and blood.

Future TMIP software will provide enhancements to existing functionality as well as new functionality and capabilities such as patient movement and medical regulating capabilities, dental and vision support and more.

Source: TRICARE News Release at <http://www.tricare.osd.mil>

## ***BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT GROUP***

Sponsored by: Maternal Infant Ward & Breast Center  
WHAT BETTER WAY TO FIND OUT ABOUT:

- \*Latching On
- \*Meeting other new mothers
- \*Sore Nipples
- \*Breast Engorgement
- \*Milk Collection & Storage
- \*Sexuality
- \*Back to Work

LOCATION, DATE & TIME:  
Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms  
Classroom 3 (behind Family Practice Clinic)  
Every Monday 10 a.m. -noon  
Breast Education Center 830-2501



# Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative Certificate of Intent Awarded to Hospital

By Stephanie Gable, RN, IBCLC  
Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital

The Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital was awarded the Baby-Friendly Initiative Certificate of Intent November 20, 2002. This certificate is the first step in the process of receiving World-wide recognition as a hospital that is committed to establishing the highest standard possible for the protection, promotion, and support of breastfeeding. Currently there are only 33 Baby-Friendly™ Hospitals and Birth Centers in the United States. Forty-two additional hospitals including Bush Naval Hospital are working toward designation of "Baby-Friendly".

## What Is The UNICEF Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative and Why Do We Need It?

More than one million infants worldwide die every year because they are not breastfed or they are given other foods too early. Millions more live in poor health, contract preventable diseases, and battle malnutrition. Thousands of infants in the United States suffer the ill effects of an infant formula-feeding culture including an increased risk of diarrhea, respiratory and ear infections and allergic skin disorders.

In the United States, the benefits of breastfeeding could translate into millions of dollars

## 4-D Ultrasound: Putting a 'New Face' on the Unknown

By Journalist 2nd Class (SW/AW) Sybil McCarrol, National  
Naval Medical Center Public Affairs

BETHESDA, Md. (NNS) -- Parents viewing ultrasound pictures of their unborn children at National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) have entered, as "Twilight Zone" creator Rod Serling was fond of saying, another dimension.

A new 4-dimensional ultrasound machine (4-D), located in NNMC's Prenatal Assessment Care Unit, provides a truer image than previous ultrasounds.

Army Lt. Col. Christian Macedonia, a maternal fetal specialist, is well acquainted with the 4-D and has raved about the efficient technology of this machine.

"For scanners like myself, working with this machine is like learning a new language. Real-time research has been done on improving ultrasounds for 30 years," said Macedonia. "Finally, over the last couple of years, computers have become advanced enough to handle this sort of data."

According to Macedonia, the new 4-D takes the same data that the old 2-dimensional ultrasound (2-D) generated and produces a three-dimensional, clear, lifelike image of the baby.

"The simplest way to explain how 4-D functions is to compare it with its predecessor, the 2-dimensional ultrasound," he said. "While the 2-D acts like a virtual knife and takes two-dimensional picture slices of the body, the 4-D takes those slices and puts them together to form a three-dimensional loaf or whole image."

This "whole loaf" video image of the baby appears in real time, showing a true image of a baby as it moves and develops in the womb. The real time is the fourth dimension, hence the name "4-D."

Macedonia says he believes the hospital couldn't have made a better decision when it bought the 4-D ultrasound machine.

"This purchase was done with patients in mind," said Macedonia. "It truly has a unique niche in medicine. This is a democratization of medicine that allows patients to see what the doctor sees. People can see characteristics of the baby's face and facial expressions because the clarity is sharp."

Lt. Cmdr. Carl Millward, anatomic pathologist, and his wife have already spent some time with their unborn daughter via 4-D.

"It was fantastic," said Millward. "We didn't know what to expect. The 4-D machine looks the same as the 2-D, but it certainly is different. Getting to see her little face...it was an experience all in its own. This truly is a great resource for the Navy community."

The 4-D ultrasound is also crucial for finding anomalies in babies. "Anomalies are easy to see on the 4-D," explained Macedonia. "It's important for a parent to understand the level of complications their child will have. They have to begin researching and think about surgeries and maybe prolonged medical care once their child is born."

As far as the future, Macedonia is convinced that the 4-D is going to part of something great.

"The machine has a lot of potential that we haven't tapped," said Macedonia. "For example, we want to establish a "telemedicine network" in the future, where we can provide a level of care regardless of where the patient is located."

of savings to our health care system through decreased hospitalizations and pediatric clinic visits. For diarrhea alone, approximately 200,000 US children, most of whom are young infants, are hospitalized each year. Many of these cases could have been prevented with breastfeeding. In a study of morbidity in an affluent US population, Dewey and colleagues found the incidence of otitis media (ear infections) was 80% lower in breastfed infants.

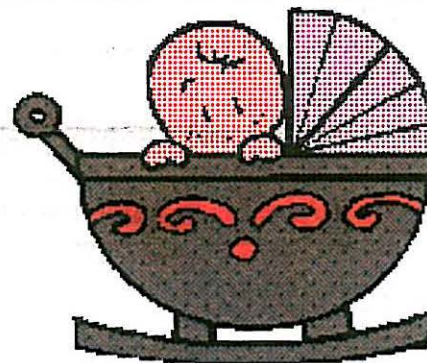
It is a rare exception when a woman cannot breastfeed her baby for physical or medical reasons. Yet, a woman's ability to feel self-confident with her decision to breastfeed is challenged by her family and friends, the media, and health care providers. Much has been done in the past few years to strengthen the sources of support for women to breastfeed.

Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital is committed to the promotion and support of breastfeeding. The goal nation-wide is 75% of mothers to breastfeed exclusively at the time of discharge from the hospital and 50% at 6 months. Eighty-six percent of the mothers that delivered at the Naval Hospital in December 2002 chose to breastfeed their babies. Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital has exceeded the first goal every month since August 2002.

If you are experiencing problems with Breastfeeding, are interested in obtaining more information on breastfeeding, interested in networking with other breastfeeding mothers or would like to assist other mothers with breastfeeding there are many resources available in the Base community. These include

Monthly Breastfeeding Basics classes, The Mom Connection Breastfeeding Mothers Group that meets weekly the Lactation Education Clinic that is open Monday through Friday, 08-1600 and classes offered through New Parent Support Program.

The Naval Hospital also employs a full-time International Board Certified Lactation Consultant who can be reached at 830-2126 for any problems, questions, concerns, or as an additional resource for our breastfeeding mothers.



## JOURNEY INTO MOTHERHOOD

Feeling Overwhelmed, Scared, Alone, Sad, Frazzled?

Or just want to meet other new moms?

You're not the only one!

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Support Group for Expectant and New Moms

Finding Solutions through Education and Support

Where: Conference Room - Mental Health Clinic

Every Thursday afternoon

Time: 12:30 to 2 p.m.

Group leaders: Beverly Dexter, PhD 830-2935

Janet Hamilton, MSW 830-2584

## Patient Safety Tip...

Good sources of info about your condition include your doctor/nurse, libraries, websites and support groups.



# Hard Charger's...



*Lt. j.g. Matthew Green takes the oath during his recent promotion ceremony.*



*HM3 Ferran Mora of the hospital's Surgery Suite is awarded his Honorary Desert Rat Certificate from Captain Lynda A. Salmond, Commanding Officer, Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms.*



*HMI Archie Clary of the Branch Medical Clinic China Lake has been named the Marine Corps Task Force Training Command Sailor of the Year.*



*HM3 Yoatzin Soto of the Surgery Suite is awarded his Honorary Desert Rat Certificate from Capt. Salmond.*



## Navy Medicine Grieving The Loss Of Two Of Its Own

By Brian Badura, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

WASHINGTON - Navy Medicine mourns the loss of two colleagues today, Capt. David Brown, Medical Corps, and Cmdr. Laurel Blair Salton Clark, Medical Corps. Both were aboard the space shuttle Columbia when it broke apart Saturday during its final descent.

Brown and Clark participated in shuttle mission STS-107 as mission specialists. During the 16-day flight, their skills helped to further research on many medical, scientific and environmental experiments. This was their first trip into space.

"Today, the thoughts and prayers of the entire Navy Medicine community go out to the Brown and Clark families and the families of the other crewmembers lost in this tragedy," said Navy Surgeon General Vice Adm. Michael L. Cowan, Medical Corps. "We will always remember the significant contributions and adventurous spirit of two of our finest professionals."

Before joining the astronaut program in 1996, both worked as flight surgeons and gained extensive operational experience throughout their careers.

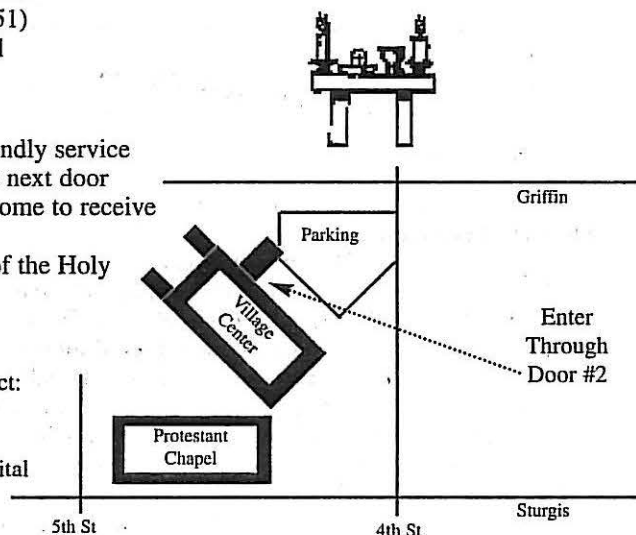
Brown also earned his naval aviator designation, graduating first in his class. Clark worked extensively in the undersea community, with qualifications including diving medical officer and submarine medical officer.

## 1030 Service of Holy Communion

Every Sunday at 10:30 a.m.  
Village Center (Bldg 1551)  
In the Meditation Chapel  
(Enter door #2 then follow signs)

- \* A 50-minute child friendly service
- \* Nursery Care available next door
- \* All Christians are welcome to receive communion
- \* A weekly celebration of the Holy Eucharist

For more information contact:  
Chaplain Spaulding  
Command Chaplain  
Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital  
830-2429



## DoD Ready to Protect Against Biological Threats

Department of Defense Health Affairs Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (NNS) -- Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs William Winkenwerder Jr. recently stated the U.S. military is prepared to protect its personnel against the use of biological weapons.

The department uses a range of measures to protect service members from biological threats, including combinations of protective clothing and equipment, detectors, vaccines, antibiotics and training.

"The Chemical Biological Defense Program's initiatives over the last decade have significantly improved our ability to protect service members from the effects of biowarfare weapons. Our commanders on the battlefield today have the benefit of those improvements," Winkenwerder said.

DoD's protective measures are strongest against two significant biological threats: anthrax and smallpox. DoD has supplies of anthrax and smallpox vaccines available to protect its at-risk forces.

"In addition to the vaccines against the most likely biological threats, anthrax and smallpox, DoD has other countermeasures to protect against biological threat agents," Winkenwerder said.

The department continues to develop enhanced detection, prevention and treatment methods to guard against all biological threats, while working with other federal agencies, especially the Department of Health and Human Services.

America's troops are well-trained and protected with a robust, multilayered set of defenses against bioweapons. DoD is committed to developing and fielding the most effective countermeasures to keep our uniformed men and women healthy and safe.



## Desert Pain Medicine Group Now in Yucca Valley

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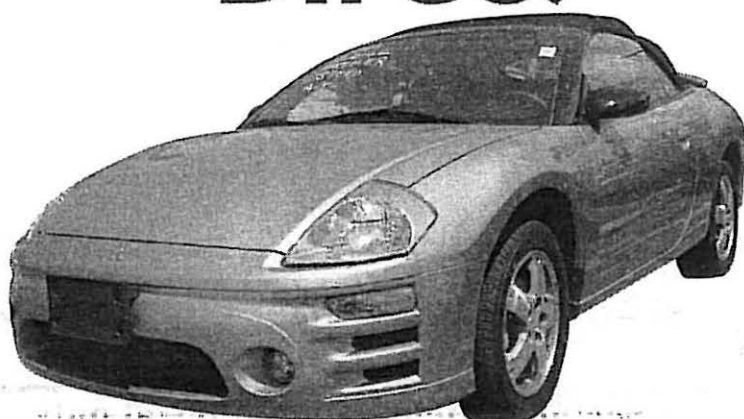
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★ Se Habla Espanol★

## VACCINE...

*Continued from page 1*

Most of the time, this took place in situations of close contact, such as happens in a household, or in similar situations involving close physical contact where careful hand hygiene and site care may not be followed.

People getting the vaccine will receive instructions for special care to minimize the risk of spreading vaccinia by touch, but you also can take precautions to protect yourself. These precautions should be followed until the scab that forms on the vaccine after vaccination falls off on its own (in 2 to 3 weeks).

### What You Should Do:

Do not touch the vaccine site or any materials that might be contaminated with live virus from the site (such as bandages, towels, clothing, or washcloths used by the person who got the vaccine).

If you accidentally come in contact with the vaccine site, or something that may be contaminated with live virus, immediately wash with soap and warm water.

If you share a bed with the vaccinated person, be sure that they are wearing a gauze bandage held in place with first aid adhesive tape over the vaccination site. As an extra precaution, the person who got the vaccine can wear a shirt or pajamas that cover the bandaged vaccine site. If they do not, you may choose to sleep in a separate bed. (When involved in direct patient care, healthcare workers should cover the gauze with a semi-permeable dressing as an additional barrier.)

Keep a separate laundry hamper for items like clothing, towels, or bedding that have come in direct contact with the vaccine site or drainage from the site. Launder these items, using warm water with detergent and/or bleach and wash hands carefully afterwards.

Remind the person who got the vaccine to follow site care and hand washing instructions. If their hand is contaminated and they touch you, you can contract vaccinia.

## JOINT COMMISSION...

*Continued from page 1*

The requests must also indicate the nature of the information to be provided at the interview. Such requests should be addressed to

**Division of Accreditation Operations**

**Account Representative**

**Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations**

**One Renaissance Boulevard**

**Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181**

The Joint Commission will acknowledge such request in writing by telephone and will inform the organization of the request for any interview. The organization will, in turn, notify the interviewee of the date, time, and place of the meeting.

Concerns may also be brought to the attention of the Medical Inspector General by calling 1-800-637-6175.

This notice is posted in accordance with the Joint Commission's requirements and may not be removed before the survey is completed.

### Kick the habit and learn to become tobacco free!

The Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital Health Promotions Program offers tobacco cessation classes in the hospital.

Classes are offered at two convenient times of noon and 5:30 p.m.

To sign up, call Health Promotions at 830-2814.

The next set of tobacco cessation classes will start Feb. 11. Call now before it all goes up in smoke!

## Life's Lesson...

You know you're getting old when you have a party and the neighbors didn't even realize it.



# DoD Establishes Health Information Security Task Force

*Special Release from the Department of Defense*

WASHINGTON (NNS) -- The Department of Defense announced this week additional steps to enhance patient protection from unauthorized access to or criminal use of sensitive personal information.

The action comes in response to the recent criminal theft of computer equipment and personal identification information from a Tricare contractor in Arizona.

"Electronic sharing of health care information provides great advances in patient safety, in reduced errors in claims processing, and in improved customer service. But, there are risks in electronic communications that must be identified and measures implemented to prevent or manage those risks," said William Winkenwerder Jr., assistant secretary of defense for health affairs.

"Working with our contractor, TriWest, I am pleased to report that we have initiated contact with all 562,000 beneficiaries who had their personal information stolen. These efforts to quickly identify and inform beneficiaries should help deter or prevent identify theft crimes."

Winkenwerder cited a number of steps that will inform and help beneficiaries protect themselves from criminal use of their personal information.

All 562,000 military beneficiaries whose information was contained on the computer files have been notified by mail of the theft and informed of the actions they should take to protect themselves from identity theft or other misuse of their personal information.

Fewer than 25 persons also may have had personal credit card information compromised. Each of these individuals has been contacted by phone and informed of the incident and proper actions to take in response.

Every Tricare contractor worldwide has been notified of the theft, and directed by DoD to conduct an assessment of information security procedures. DoD will evaluate each assessment with its contractors.

The criminal investigation remains active, led by the Defense Criminal Investigative Service and supported by the U.S. Attorney in Phoenix, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other law enforcement agencies. TriWest has posted a \$100,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and successful prosecution of the perpetrators and return of the stolen

items. Winkenwerder stated that he has focused efforts on heightening information security throughout the health care system.

"Although this incident has raised patient concerns about the security of their military medical records, there is no connection with this criminal theft and the military's computerized health care records," Winkenwerder said. "Our new health records system, known as CHCS-II, has security built into the basic design, and security is continually reassessed."

"Cutting edge data encryption and a high level of physical protection at a secure government location provide a solid security framework to that program. Nonetheless, we are taking additional steps to heighten information security throughout our health care system."

These steps include:

A worldwide health care information security assessment will be conducted at every military treatment facility and contractor location to review existing procedures and to ensure physical security of sensitive information.

A health information security task force comprised of DoD and Service medical leaders and information system experts will assemble next week, consult with TRICARE contractor representatives and recommend any additional requirements for information security.

New health information systems to be introduced in the coming months will be compliant with or exceed the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act legal requirements for protection of patient information.



## African-American History Month



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Yucca Valley resident  
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